NUMB. XVII.

The SPECTATOR.

——Tetrum ante Omnia vultum. Juv.

Tuesday, March 20. 1711.

SINCE our Perſons are not of our own Making, when they are ſuch as appear Defective or Uncomely, it is, methinks, an honeſt and laudable Fortitude to dare to be Ugly; at leaſt to keep our ſelves from being abaſhed with a Conſciouſneſs of Imperfections which we cannot help, and in which there is no Guilt. I would not defend an haggard Beau, for paſſing away much time at a Glaſs, and giving Softneſſes and Languiſhing Graces to Deformity. All I intend is, that we ought to be contented with our Countenance and Shape, ſo far, as never to give our ſelves an uneaſie Reflection on that Subject. It is to the ordinary People, who are not accuſtomed to make very proper Remarks on any Occaſion, matter of great Jeſt, if a Man enters with a promient Pair of Shoulders into an Aſſembly, or is diſtinguiſhed by an Expanſion of Mouth, or Obliquity of Aſpect. It is happy for a Man, that has any of theſe Odneſſes about him, if he can be as merry upon himſelf, as others are apt to be upon that Occaſion: When he can poſſeſs himſelf with ſuch a Chearfulneſs, Women and Children, who were at firſt frighted at him, will afterwards be as much pleaſed with him. As it is barbarous in others to railly him for natural Defects, it is extreamly agreeable when he can Jeſt upon himſelf for them.

Madam *Maintenon*'s firſt Husband was an Hero in this Kind, and has drawn many Pleaſantries from the Irregularity of his Shape, which he deſcribes as very much reſembling the Letter Z. He diverts himſelf likewiſe by repreſenting to his Reader the Make of an Engine and Pully, with which he uſed to take off his Hat. When there happens to be any thing ridiculous in a Viſage, and the Owner of it thinks it an Aſpect of Dignity, he muſt be of very great Quality to be exempt from Raillery: The beſt Expedient therefore is to be pleaſant upon himſelf. Prince *Harry* and *Falſtaffe*, in *Shakeſpear*, have carry'd the Ridicule upon Fat and Lean as far as it will go. *Falſtaffe* is Humourouſly called *Woolſack*, *Bed-preſſer*, and *Hill of Fleſh*; *Harry*, a *Starveling*, an *Elves-Skin*, a *Sheath*, a *Bow-caſe*, and a *Tuck*. There is, in ſeveral incidents of the Converſation between them, the Jeſt ſtill kept up upon the Perſon. Great Tenderneſs and Senſibility in this Point is one of the greateſt Weakneſſes of Self-love; for my own part, I am a little unhappy in the Mold of my Face, which is not quite ſo long as it is broad: Whether this might not partly ariſe from my opening my Mouth much ſeldomer than other People, and by Conſequence not ſo much lengthning the Fibres of my Viſage, I am not at leiſure to determine. However it be, I have been often put out of Countenance by the Shortneſs of my Face, and was formerly at great Pains in concealing it by wearing a Periwigg with an high Foretop, and letting my Beard grow. But now I have thoroughly got over this Delicacy, and could be contented it were much ſhorter, provided it might qualify me for a Member of the Merry Club, which the following Letter gives me an Account of. I have recieved it from *Oxford*, and as it abounds with the Spirit of Mirth and good Humour, which is natural to that Place, I ſhall ſet it down Word for Word as it came to me.

Moſt Profound Sir,

'HAving been very well entertained, in the laſt 'of your Speculations that I have yet ſeen, 'by your Specimen upon Clubs, which I therefore 'hope you will continue, I ſhall take the Liberty to 'furniſh you with a brief Account of ſuch a one as 'perhaps you have not ſeen in all your Travels, un'leſs it was your Fortune to touch upon ſome 'of the woody Parts of the *African* Continent, 'in your Voyage to or from *Grand Cairo*. There 'have aroſe in this Univerſity, (long ſince you 'left us without ſaying any thing) ſeveral of theſe 'inferior Hebdomadal Societies, as *the Punning 'Club*, *the Witty Club*, and amongſt the reſt *the 'Handſom Club*; as a Burleſque upon which, a

'certain

'certain merry Species, that seem to have come 'into the World in Masquerade, for some Years 'last past have associated themselves together, and 'assum'd the Name of *the Ugly Club*: This ill-'favoured Fraternity consists of a President and 'twelve Fellows; the Choice of which is not con-'fin'd by Patent to any particular Foundation, (as '*St. John*'s Men would have the World believe, 'and have therefore erected a separate Society within 'themselves) but Liberty is left to elect from any 'School in *Great Britain*, provided the Candidates 'be within the Rules of the Club, as set forth in a 'Table entitled *The Act of Deformity*. A Clause 'or two of which I shall transmit to you.

'I. That no Person whatsoever shall be ad-'mitted without a visible Quearity in his Aspect, 'or peculiar Cast of Countenance; of which the 'President and Officers for the time being are to 'determine, and the President to have the casting 'Voice.

'II. That a singular Regard be had, upon Ex-'amination, to the Gibbosity of the Gentlemen 'that offer themselves, as Founders Kinsmen, or 'to the Obliquity of their Figure, in what sort so-'ever.

'III. That if the Quantity of any Man's 'Nose be eminently miscalculated, whether as to 'Length or Breadth, he shall have a just Pretence 'to be elected.

'*Lastly*, That if there shall be two or more 'Competitors for the same Vacancy, *cæteris paribus*, 'he that has the thickest Skin to have the Preference.

'Every fresh Member, upon his first Night, is 'to entertain the Company with a Dish of Cod-fish, 'and a Speech in praise of *Æsop*; whose Portraiture 'they have in full Proportion, or rather Dispropor-'tion, over the Chimney; and their Design is, as soon 'as their Funds are sufficient, to purchase the Heads 'of *Thersites*, *Duns Scotus*, *Scarron*, *Hudibras*, and 'the old Gentleman in *Oldham*, with all the celebra-'ted ill Faces of Antiquity, as Furniture for the Club 'Room.

'As they have always been profess'd Admirers 'of the other Sex, so they unanimously declare that 'they will give all possible Encouragement to such 'as will take the Benefit of the Statute, tho' none yet 'have appeared to do it.

'The worthy President, who is their most devoted 'Champion, has lately shown me two Copies of Ver-'ses composed by a Gentleman of his Society; the 'first, a Congratulatory Ode inscrib'd to Mrs. *Touch-'wood*, upon the loss of her two Fore-teeth; the 'other, a Panegyrick upon Mrs. *Andiron*'s left 'Shoulder. Mrs. *Vizard* (he says) since the Small 'Pox, is grown tolerably ugly, and a top Toast in the 'Club; but I never hear him so lavish of his fine 'things, as upon old *Nell Trot*, who constantly 'officiates at their Table; her he even adores, and 'extolls as the very Counterpart of Mother *Shipton*; 'in short, *Nell* (says he) is one of the Extraordi-'nary Works of Nature; but as for Complexion, 'Shape, and Features, so valued by others, they are 'all meer Outside and Symmetry, which is his A-'version. Give me leave to add, that the Presi-'dent is a facetious, pleasant Gentleman, and never 'more so, than when he has got (as he calls 'em) 'his dear Mummers about him; and he often pro-'tests it does him good to meet a Fellow with a 'right genuine Grimmace in his Air, (which is so a-'greeable in the generality of the *French* Nation;) 'and as an Instance of his Sincerity in this par-'ticular, he gave me a sight of a List in his 'Pocket-book of all of this Class, who for these 'five Years have fallen under his Observation, 'with himself at the Head of 'em, and in the Rear '(as one of a promising and improving Aspect)

SIR,

Oxford, March 12, 1710.

Your Obliged and Humble Servant,

Alexander Carbuncle.

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